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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ATHENS 002735

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JUSTICE FOR EPSTEIN, HERRUP, FROMSTEIN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ANARCHISTS](#)

SUBJECT: GREECE/N17: CONVICTED N17 CHIEF GUNMAN GIVES  
INTERVIEW

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The October 13 edition of "Eleftherotypia," one of Greece's top circulation dailies, gave prime space to the rantings of Dimitris Koufodinas, the top gunman for the terrorist organization November 17, who is currently serving multiple life sentences for his murderous acts. Koufodinas called the murder of Embassy officer Richard Welch in 1975 (N17's first assassination) the "determining act of our generation." The interview, unprecedented in its length, reflects the continuing sympathy in the Greek press for N17's so-called revolutionary acts and comes just weeks before the N17 appeals trial, set to begin on December 2. At our suggestion, George Momferatos, leader of the organization of family members of N17 victims ("Os Edo," which translates to "Enough Already") and whose father was murdered by N17, told Embassy he would ask "Eleftherotypia" for space to answer Koufodinas and present him as the coldblooded, remorseless killer he really is. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) Dimitris Koufodinas, serving multiple life terms for his role as the chief gunman of the November 17 terrorist group, gave an interview to the daily "Eleftherotypia" (center-left, staunchly anti-government, which used to print all of N17's proclamations) that occupied the two center pages of the paper's October 13 edition. Koufodinas, who has assumed the "political" responsibility of all of N17's terrorist actions, ranged freely over international politics, ideology, and the global war on terror, and spoke about N17 as "an organization of political and social protest."

3. (U) When asked to describe how he came to join N17, Koufodinas launched into memories from the Greek resistance against the Nazis, the period of the Athens Polytechnic uprising of November 1973 (from which the terrorist group derived its name) and the "narrowing of the realm of legitimate struggles." Indeed, Koufodinas said that in view of the revolutionary climate of those days, the killing of "CIA (Athens) station chief (Richard) Welch... (was) a determining (act) for our generation." (Note: Welch was murdered by N17 on December 23, 1975. End Note.)

4. (U) Koufodinas denied that N17 was defeated, and accused the Greek Left of having become a "neo-liberal Left," that is, part of the establishment. He predicted that the struggles of peoples "won't lead to a 'new dark epoch,' but rather to 'forward motion.'" He argued that N17 had failed to re-design its armed struggle when it had the opportunity and according to the changing conditions of society. Asked about his defense at the upcoming trial, Koufodinas refused to go in to details and called for "solidarity and respect" among the 17N defendants.

5. (SBU) The generally sympathetic interview comes only weeks before the opening of the N17 appeals trial (scheduled for December 2) and against the backdrop of increasing reports that the N17 convicts are deeply divided over legal tactics as well as political and ideological questions. Koufodinas has been publicly assailed by supporters of his co-defendant Alexandros Yiotopoulos, considered to be the leader of the terrorist group and who is also serving multiple life terms, for accepting political responsibility. Commenting on this, Koufodinas told his interviewer, "The attack against me degrades our whole case."

6. (SBU) COMMENT: That Koufodinas found prime printspace for his utterances in one of the largest circulation dailies is not a surprise given the sympathetic approach with which this quadrant of the Greek media deals with domestic terrorism. Before him, fellow convicts, including N17 leader Yiotopoulos and N17 bomber Savvas Xyros, also have given radio interviews and published letters and articles. Koufodinas's interview was unprecedented, however, in its sheer length. "Eleftherotypia" did not reveal how the interview was conducted, yet the two full pages of print it came to produce point to either a minimum 10-12 pages of single-spaced typescript, or at least two hours of a

face-to-face oral exchange. Skillfully crafted Q&A obviously aimed to further enhance Koufodinas's reputation as the "quiet ideological thinker" of the 17N terrorist group -- and provide receptive ears with yet more of the "revolutionary" pseudo-philosophy cant that seeks to justify N17's murderous history.

17. (SBU) COMMENT (cont'd): Embassy has contacted the "Os Edo" ("Enough already") organization made up of family members of N17 victims -- including Athens Mayor Dora Bakoyianni, whose husband, MP Pavlos Bakoyiannis, was shot to death, and the families of the five murdered Embassy employees -- to see if there is interest in responding. Os Edo President George Momferatos, whose father was murdered by N17 thugs, wholeheartedly agreed and will approach "Eleftherotypia" to ask for space to present the victims' side of the story and present Koufodinas as the coldblooded, remorseless killer that he is.  
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